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TUCSON

Two 17-year-old high school students cancelled plans to attend a youth festival at Moscow after deciding it was a front for communist propaganda.

Erica Ferguson of St. Gregory High School and Laurel Lamb of University High School found out the event was intended to promote the Soviet line on world issues.

Between the two of them, they contacted the FBI, CIA and State Department and did research at the University of Arizona Library.

What they found was that the 12th Annual Festival of Youth and Students, involving delegates from 144 nations, wasn't what they had anticipated.

Lamb said she first heard of the festival from friends in a sister-city project that hopes to pair Tucson with the Soviet city of Novokuznetsk.

Lamb said she began to have suspicions when an organizer from the U.S. National Preparatory Committee at New York asked her to bring along posters for a festival discoteque.

The organizer wanted posters depicting "the struggle of youth under the Reagan administration for the past five years," Lamb said.

The organizer knew of Arizona issues because Lamb was asked for posters showing striking copper workers, the sanctuary movement, groundwater problems and the plight of Indians.

Lamb said she sent \$900 to cover travel and other expenses before she decided to cancel.